

more young Americans, come safely home to their families and loved ones.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:36 p.m. on February 26 in the Manager's Office at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Francisco, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Radio Remarks on "Read Across America" Day

March 1, 1999

The best and most enjoyable way for children to open their minds is by opening a book. This Tuesday America will celebrate "Read Across America" Day. More than one million people—from baseball star Cal Ripken, Jr., to the sailors of the U.S.S. *Saipan*—will share the joy of reading with children in every part of our country. I encourage all caring adults to get involved. Read to children on "Read Across America" Day, and read to them every day. Together, we can make our children the best readers in the world.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 2:55 p.m. in the Oval Office on February 22 for later broadcast as a public service announcement. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Radio Actual-ity Line.

Radio Remarks on Internet Accessibility in Classrooms

March 1, 1999

Vice President Gore and I have set a goal of connecting every classroom in America to the Internet. I'm pleased to announce that new Department of Education data show that more than half of all our Nation's classrooms are now connected—nearly twice as many connections as last year. And thanks to new E-rate discounts that help schools and libraries connect to the Internet, we'll reach our goal of every classroom and library connected by the year 2000.

Computers and new educational software can make a real difference in the way teachers teach and a student learns. Because of our efforts, children in poorer or isolated areas will now have access to the same universe of knowledge as children in the most affluent suburbs. All our children will be technologically literate and better prepared for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the future. But we also must make sure that teachers are as comfortable with a computer as they are with a chalkboard. That's why Congress should support my \$800 million educational technology initiative, including more than \$100 million for technology training for the teachers themselves.

By giving our children the skills they need to succeed in the jobs of the future, we'll build a stronger nation for the 21st century. I want to especially thank Vice President Gore, who's done so much to put the future at the fingertips of our children.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 1:40 p.m. on February 26 in the Manager's Office at the Grant Hyatt Hotel in San Francisco, CA, for later broadcast. The remarks were also made available on the White House Press Radio Actuality Line.

Statement on Internet Accessibility in Classrooms

March 1, 1999

Vice President Gore and I have set a goal of connecting every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000. Today I am pleased to announce that new Department of Education data show that more than half of all classrooms are connected—nearly twice as many connections as last year. And thanks to new E-rate discounts that help schools and libraries connect to the Internet, we will reach our goal by the year 2000.

Computers, the Internet, and educational software can make a real difference in the way teachers teach and students learn. Because of our efforts, children in the most isolated inner city or rural town will have access to the same universe of knowledge as a child in the most affluent suburb. Parents will be able to communicate more frequently with teachers and keep up with the progress of

their child in school. Our children will be “technologically literate”—and better prepared for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the future. But we must also make sure that teachers are as comfortable with a computer as they are with the chalkboard. That is why Congress should support my \$800 million educational technology initiative—including more than \$100 million to train teachers in the latest technology.

By giving our children the skills they need to succeed in the jobs of the future, we will build a stronger nation for the 21st century. I particularly want to thank Vice President Gore, who has done so much to put the future at the fingertips of our children.

Statement on the Proposed “Education Accountability Act”

March 1, 1999

Today’s news of improvement in achievement for students in high-poverty schools is welcome, but we must not rest until all students meet the challenging standards we set for them. That is why I urge Senators in both parties not only to support this week’s vote to put 100,000 new, well-prepared teachers in the classroom but also to enact my “Education Accountability Act.” This act will help move our education system forward by ensuring that States and school districts end social promotion, phase out the use of unqualified teachers, turn around low-performing schools, provide parents with report cards on schools, and implement effective discipline policies. While our education reform efforts are clearly headed in the right direction, we must take these important steps to close the gap between students and increase the pace of reform.

Proclamation 7169—Irish-American Heritage Month, 1999

March 1, 1999

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

During the month of March each year, as millions of Americans celebrate St. Patrick’s

Day, we remember with special pride our Irish heritage. We remember our ancestors who stood on Ireland’s western shores, yearning for the promise of America. Fleeing famine and injustice, they longed for a new world of opportunities. Millions of these courageous men and women set sail from Ireland, leaving behind all that they had ever known to seek the promise of America. They gave to their new homeland their strength and spirit, sinew and determination, eloquence and wit. In return, America offered them the opportunity for a better life, the chance to rise above poverty and discrimination, and a future where they could live out their dreams.

The Irish who came to America endured many hardships, but they prospered and helped to build our country with innumerable physical and intellectual contributions. They gave us Presidents like Woodrow Wilson, John Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan; patriots like John Barry and Stephen Moylan, who fought fiercely for American independence in the Revolutionary War; jurists like Justice William Brennan, who championed justice and equality; suffragists and social reformers like Maria McCreery; journalists, peacekeepers, artists, playwrights, labor leaders, and educators. These and so many other Irish Americans seized the opportunity of freedom America promised. From their grand literary tradition to their deep religious faith, Irish Americans and their descendants have enriched every facet of American history.

But Irish-American Heritage Month is a time to look to the future as well as to the past. Today we rejoice at the promise of peace in Northern Ireland and the resolve of her people to approach their differences not with weapons, but with words. While the path to peace is rarely easy, it is by necessity a community effort. Americans are a vital part of the process in Northern Ireland by virtue of our shared heritage and shared goal of lasting peace and a better future for all God’s children. By lending our hearts, minds, and prayers to the work of peace, we can best fulfill our obligation to the generations of Irish men and women who have given so much to our Nation’s life and history.